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TAGS: [IAEA](#) [PREL](#) [KNPP](#) [SY](#) [EG](#) [SF](#)
SUBJECT: IAEA/BOG: AFRICA GROUP IN UPHEAVAL; SYRIA SEEKS
SUPPORT FOR MESA SEAT

Classified By: Ambassador Gregory L. Schulte for Reasons 1.4 b, d

11. (SBU) This is an action request, see para 4.

12. (C) Summary: Mission received an inexplicable dipnote from Syria requesting U.S. support for its candidacy on the 2008-2009 Board of Governors. The Middle East South Asia group (MESA) is not expected to have a contested election requiring a vote in the General Conference (GC) so the note may be an administrative error. Mission seeks Department guidance and recommends a pro forma response. Meanwhile, the Africa group election for the 2008-2009 Board is hotly contested by seven candidates for two seats. Among the contenders is Egypt, which lobbied Ambassador Schulte in Cairo. Egypt, South Africa and possibly Algeria are also reportedly interested in serving as Chairman of the Board, as it will be the Africa group's turn to chose a Chairman. If the Africa group does not resolve its internal wrangling, these issues could come to a vote in the GC, unprecedented in recent years. End Summary.

13. (C) Mission received a note verbale (text para 7) from the Syrian Mission soliciting U.S. support for Syria's candidacy to the IAEA Board of Governors (BOG) in 2008-2010. Normally, each regional group decides its candidates for open seats on the Board, which the September General Conference (GC) then approves by acclamation. The GC has not held a contested election for an open Board seat in recent memory, so Syria's request for support outside its regional group (Middle East South Asia, MESA) is unusual. According to the Pakistani Mission, which will be vacating the MESA seat in September, Syria sent a similar note to all MESA members. Pakistan Msnoff confirmed that no other candidates have come forward within MESA. He attributes Syria's request for U.S. support to administrative error. The German Mission also received a note from Syria, but the UK and France had not yet seen one. Mission recommends a pro forma reply to Syria noting that the U.S. will not take a position on Board candidatures from other regional groups until the time of the General Conference.

14. (C) Guidance Request: Mission requests Department guidance as soon as possible. Syria could interpret the lack of a response as evidence that the U.S. would not oppose its candidacy, or claim as much to others.

15. (C) Separately, we have heard that the race for two Africa seats (being vacated by Nigeria and Ethiopia) on the 2008-2010 Board of Governors is hotly contested. According to the Moroccan Ambassador, who made a plea for enlarging the Board, there are seven candidates for the two seats, including Egypt, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Libya, Tunisia and

Sudan. The Egyptian MFA confirmed this and lobbied Ambassador Schulte during February 11-12 consultations in Cairo for support of their Board candidacy, to which the Ambassador responded that the decision is up to the regional group.

¶6. (C) It will also be the Africa group's turn to serve as Chairman of the Board in 2008-2009, and Egypt is reportedly keen to be Chairman, though MFA interlocutors deflected the question when directly asked by Ambassador Schulte, saying that they wanted to first get back on the Board. The prospect of an Egyptian Chairmanship could be damaging for U.S. interests given Egypt's unhelpful positions on Iran and Middle East issues and its status as the incoming NAM Chairman in 2009. South African Governor Minty, reportedly much to Egypt's chagrin, has also advised Africa group members of his interest in serving as Board Chair. Algerian Ambassador Feroukhi may seek the Board Chair position as well, though she is widely viewed as an ineffective Chairman based on her performance as COW Chair in the last GC and Chairman of the Committee on Safeguards and Verification (CSV). Mission will continue to monitor the upheaval in the Africa group, and use any opportunity to sway Africa group members. If the regional group fails to come to a resolution, a vote in the General Conference is possible, but unprecedented in recent years.

¶7. Text of Syrian dipnote:

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the International Atomic Energy Agency presents its compliments to the esteemed Permanent Mission of the United States of America, and has the honour to announce that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has decided to submit its candidature for election to the IAEA regular Seat of the

Board of Governors allocated to the Middle East and South Asia(MESA) region for the term 2008-2010 during the fifty second session of the General Conference in September 2008.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic always attaches great importance to the activities of the IAEA in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy, and strongly supports the Agency statutory objectives. It has fulfilled its obligations and responsibilities as a member of the Agency, and supported the goals and objectives of the Agency as an active contributor to its activities.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would therefore appreciate the invaluable support of the Government of the United States of America to its candidature during the forthcoming election.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the IAEA avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the esteemed Permanent Mission of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration.

Vienna, January 29, 2008.

End text.
SCHULTE